To: Personal Matters/Ex. 6 @gmail.com]
Cc: Diana Hammer[Personal Matters/Ex. 6
From: Hammer, Diana
Sent: Mon 11/21/2016 2:58:39 PM
Subject: FW: NY Times: Battle Lines Over Trump's Lands Policy Stretch Across 640 Million Acres
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Argh!

- Diana

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From: Frank [mailto:homebythehills@comcast.net]
Sent: Friday, November 18, 2016 3:53 PM
To: homebythehills <homebythehills@comcast.net>
Subject: NY Times: Battle Lines Over Trump's Lands Policy Stretch Across 640 Million Acres

EXCERPT: In the decades-long struggle for control of America's public lands, the Obama years were a flush time for conservation groups. The administration imposed moratoriums on uranium drilling near the Grand Canyon and blocked new coal leases. Public lands were also adapted for new uses on Mr. Obama's watch, notably a wave of national monuments based around cultural or historical significance, and a big expansion of solar energy on federal lands in Nevada. Conservatives who loathed those regulations — or new uses — are now hoping Mr. Trump shifts the balance decisively in their favor. Republicans in Congress have proposed bills weakening federal laws that protect wilderness, water quality, endangered species or that allow presidents to unilaterally name new national monuments. Some conservatives hope Mr. Trump will support their efforts to hand federal land over to states, which could sell it off or speed up drilling approvals.

Battle Lines Over Trump's Lands Policy Stretch Across 640 Million Acres

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/19/us/battle-lines-over-trumps-lands-policy-stretch-across-640-million-acres.html?_r=0

By JACK HEALY and KIRK JOHNSON

NOV. 18, 2016

DENVER — Uranium mines around the Grand Canyon. Oil drilling rigs studding the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. New coal and timber leases in the national forests. States divvying up millions of acres of federal land to dispose of as they wish.

To environmental groups, it would be a nightmare. To miners, loggers, ranchers and conservative politicians in resource-dependent areas, it would be about time. Either way, Donald J. Trump's election presages huge potential change on America's 640 million acres of federal public lands, from the deep seas east of Maine to the volcanic coasts of Hawaii.

"Into a new world," said Bruce Babbitt, who ran the Interior Department under President Bill Clinton.

In Western states, where about half of all land is controlled by federal agencies, Mr. Trump's supporters hope the pendulum swings back from what they say are overbearing Obama administration regulations that put sage grouse and owls ahead of economic growth.

Environmental groups are urging President Obama to push through last-minute preservation projects, such as naming a new national monument in the Bears Ears area of southern Utah. And they are already preparing for battles over Mr. Trump's campaign promise to "unleash" coal, oil and gas production — much of it on public land.

But the unknowns and political variables are huge, too. Mr. Trump himself, while promising to push resource extraction, has also at times spoken about preserving public lands for future generations.

History also suggests that changing lands policy is not so easy. President George W. Bush, a Republican, tried to change direction with new agency rules, only to be blocked by federal appeals court decisions. Automation in the timber industry means that even

an expanded license to cut trees in the national forests might not restore old mill towns to their blue-collar glory. And the cost of managing federal lands, especially in fighting wildfires — $2.1 billion last year, a record total, matched by the most acres burned in at least 30 years — continues to soar, threatening communities even as many of them look for new direction from the White House in how those lands are managed.

“We have a huge and growing inventory of timber in the forests and they’re going to decompose or burn, and nobody has addressed that,” said Robert H. Nelson, a professor in the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland and a former economic analyst for the Interior Department. “There’s bipartisan consensus that the federal lands system is dysfunctional,” he said.

A lumber yard outside Sweet Home, Ore. Logging industry officials said that employment could grow under a Trump administration, but that changes at the federal level would have to be profound to make a difference. Credit Ruth Fremson/The New York Times

But the hopes, and the fears, about how that system might now change are boundless.

“My big hope is that people would be able to go back to work in San Juan County and these rural areas,” said Phil Lyman, a county commissioner in southern Utah, where antigovernment feelings run as deep as the slot canyons. “You just feel like everything has been stifled with regulations.”

At the Western Watersheds Project, a conservation group focusing on the Rocky Mountain region, legal teams are on deck and ready to fight back. “We’re getting ready for an onslaught of anti-environmental policy, and we’re arming up to litigate,” said Erik Molvar, the group’s executive director. “The Trump administration is going to find it very difficult to take away all of the federal laws which have been adopted over the past 40 years.”

In the decades-long struggle for control of America's public lands, the Obama years were a flush time for conservation groups. The administration imposed moratoriums on uranium drilling near the Grand Canyon and blocked new coal leases. Public lands were also adapted for new uses on Mr. Obama's watch, notably a wave of national monuments based around cultural or historical significance, and a big expansion of solar energy on federal lands in Nevada.

Conservatives who loathed those regulations — or new uses — are now hoping Mr. Trump shifts the balance decisively in their favor. Republicans in Congress have proposed bills weakening federal laws that protect wilderness, water quality, endangered species or that allow presidents to unilaterally name new national monuments. Some conservatives hope Mr. Trump will support their efforts to hand federal land over to states, which could sell it off or speed up drilling approvals.

To see where change may come the quickest, look to the edges of Glacier National Park in Montana, at a quilt of rocky peaks and wetlands held sacred by the Blackfeet tribe. In March, the Obama administration capped a three-decade fight over oil and gas drilling in the area, called the Badger-Two Medicine, by canceling a Louisiana energy company's lease on 6,000 acres.

The company, Solenex, sued. A lawyer for the company, William Perry Pendley of the Mountain States Legal Foundation, said the incoming Trump administration could simply decide that canceling the lease had been wrong.

"All it would take," he said, "is for the Justice Department to enter the case and say, 'We've re-evaluated. We will lift the suspension and we'll permit the drilling to go forward.'"

This week, the Interior Department announced that a separate energy company with oil and gas leases on 32,000 acres in the same area had voluntarily canceled them. Blackfeet tribal leaders called it a victory for cooperation among industry, conservation activists and the government.

Photo

Conservationists have been urging President Obama to name the Bears Ears area in southern Utah a national monument before he leaves office. Credit Mark Holm for The New York Times

Proponents of two major oil pipeline projects are also optimistic. Mr. Trump has said he would move quickly to approve the Keystone XL pipeline, which Mr. Obama had blocked. The chief executive of the Texas company building the Dakota Access pipeline near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation in North Dakota said he believed that now-delayed project would sail through under Mr. Trump.

To see where things get more tangled, head into the damp woods of the Cascade Range in central Oregon, and the Olympic Peninsula of Washington State, where a long economic decline began in the late 1980s as international trade shifted timber markets to places like Canada, and automated mills eliminated tens of thousands of jobs. Those computer-run mills are not going away even if more logs start arriving.

“We really don’t have a clear and easy path to go back to the good old days when natural resource extraction was driving our economy,” said Sean Stevens, the executive director of Oregon Wild, a conservation group. “It is not as easy as just logging more,” he said.

Logging industry officials said that employment could grow, but that changes at the federal level would have to be profound to make a difference.

The first step, they said, would be to increase the budgets of federal land agencies like the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, something that conservative congressional representatives — many of them bent on budget cuts — might not want to hear.

“Yes it’s going to cost us money, but in the long term it will save us money because we face a federal forest crisis, with millions of acres that are diseased, fire-prone, and overstocked,” said Travis Joseph, the president of the American Forest Resource Council, which represents wood product companies from the Northern Rockies to California. “We have got to educate Congress and inform them that this is about an investment.”

Davis Filfred, a Navajo Nation council delegate, said he feels time is running out for the stretches of piñon pine and red sandstone known as the Bears Ears area in southern Utah. It is rich with Native American artifacts, and tribal groups and conservationists have been urging Mr. Obama to name it as a new, perhaps final, national monument before he leaves office.

Mr. Filfred drove up to Bears Ears from his home in Aneth, Utah, over Veterans Day weekend with his two sons and other members of Western tribes, and reflected on how much had already been lost there to irresponsible visitors.

“They’re taking bones, they’re taking pottery,” he said. “They’re desecrating and damaging the writing on the walls. They’re tearing up the ground with their ATVs and motorcycles. It’s heartbreaking to me when I see that. That’s why I want it protected.”

Jack Healy reported from Denver, and Kirk Johnson from Seattle.